



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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MAYOR

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PLANNING DIVISION
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

STEP 1: DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE
STAFF REPORT

Site: 108 – 110 Prospect Street

Case: HPC.DMO 2021.16

Applicant: 108-110 Prospect St, LLC

Owner: Same as applicant

Legal Ad: *Demolish principal structure.*

HPC Meeting Date: July 20, 2021*

Top: Front elevation

Bottom, left: Left elevation

Bottom, middle: Rear elevation

Bottom, Right: Right elevation



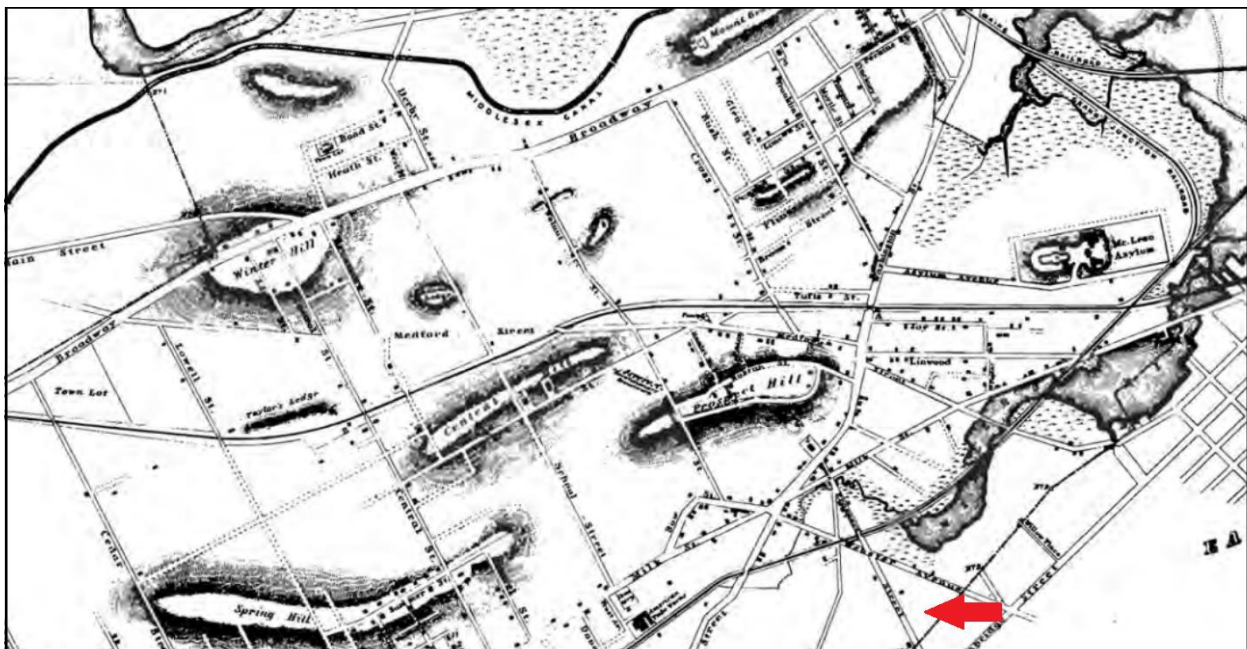
*This item was originally scheduled to be heard at the June 15th, 2021 HPC meeting. Due to the failure of the State to take action allowing for municipalities to continue to hold public meetings via remote participation until September 1st, we were unable to hold a virtual meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) on June 15th. As such all meetings were rescheduled to the July 20th meeting of the HPC.

I. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Historical Context: 108-110 Prospect Street is a three-story residential structure. Prospect St is dominated by triple-deckers and two and half story residential detached houses.

Prospect St (formerly Pine Street) was developed in an area previously used for farming and then brick manufacturing. The area around Prospect St in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, along with much of Ward 2, was primarily farm land used for grazing. Later, as it was discovered that the soil, composed of glacial clay deposits, was ideal for brick and pottery making, brick manufacturers began to buy the land from area farmers.

Prior to the Civil War only a handful of residential structures along the main thoroughfares existed in the area; Washington, Bacon, Prospect, Webster, and Medford Streets. The 1852 Draper Map shows little development, commercial or residential, around Prospect Hill and Ward 2. Along Prospect Street only three structures are denoted.



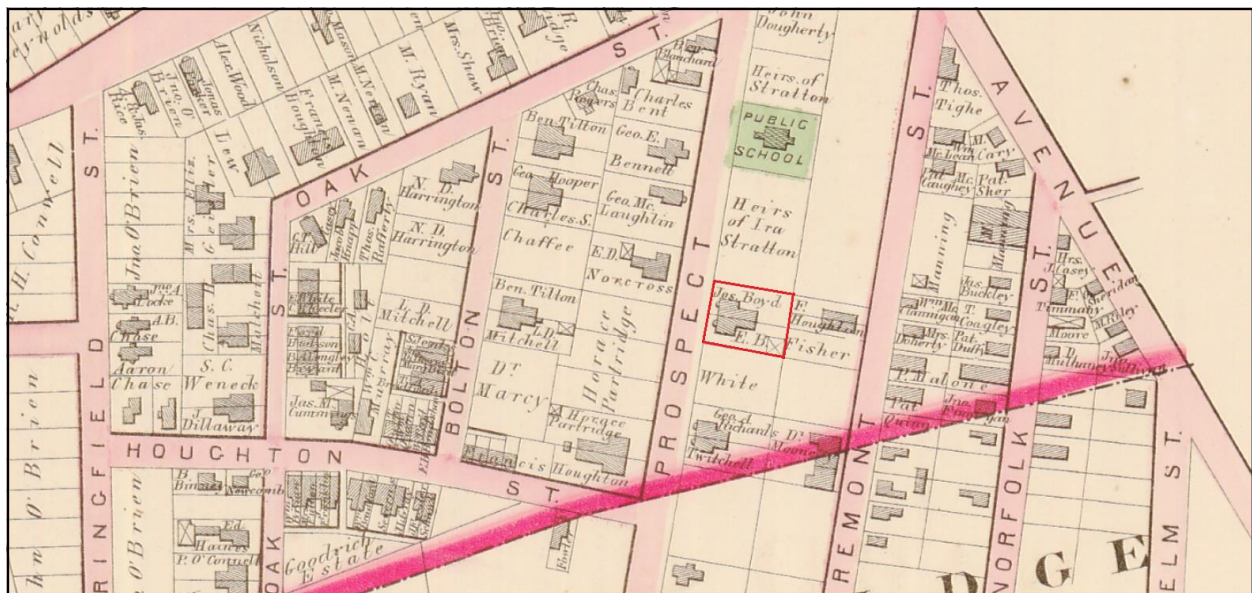
Above: 1852 Draper Map, indicating general area that 108-110 Prospect is constructed

It isn't until the post- Civil War industrial growth of Ward 2 that large-scale land speculation for residential properties begins. Brickyards, slaughterhouses, and the Union Glass Company are the largest industries to develop in the mid-nineteenth century. This was followed by other industries such as woodworking, and carriage factories. The location of streets and, therefore, housing, was built around the

growth of these factories. In the 1870s, brick apartment rows were erected for commuters as inexpensive workers' housing. This was followed by the construction of three-decker houses, near identical, to meet the need of a growing labor force.

The 1874 Hopkins Map is reflective of the rapid development that took place within Ward 2 after the Civil War. Prospect Street is shown to have developed residential structures on both sides. On the right side of Prospect, are three near identical structures, all with footprints similar to 108-110 Prospect, likely all intended as inexpensive worker housing. Each of these three structures are symmetrically laid buildings, straddling two separate lots, with a front elevation that runs parallel to the street. This style of building and property is repeated throughout the 1874 Hopkins Map.

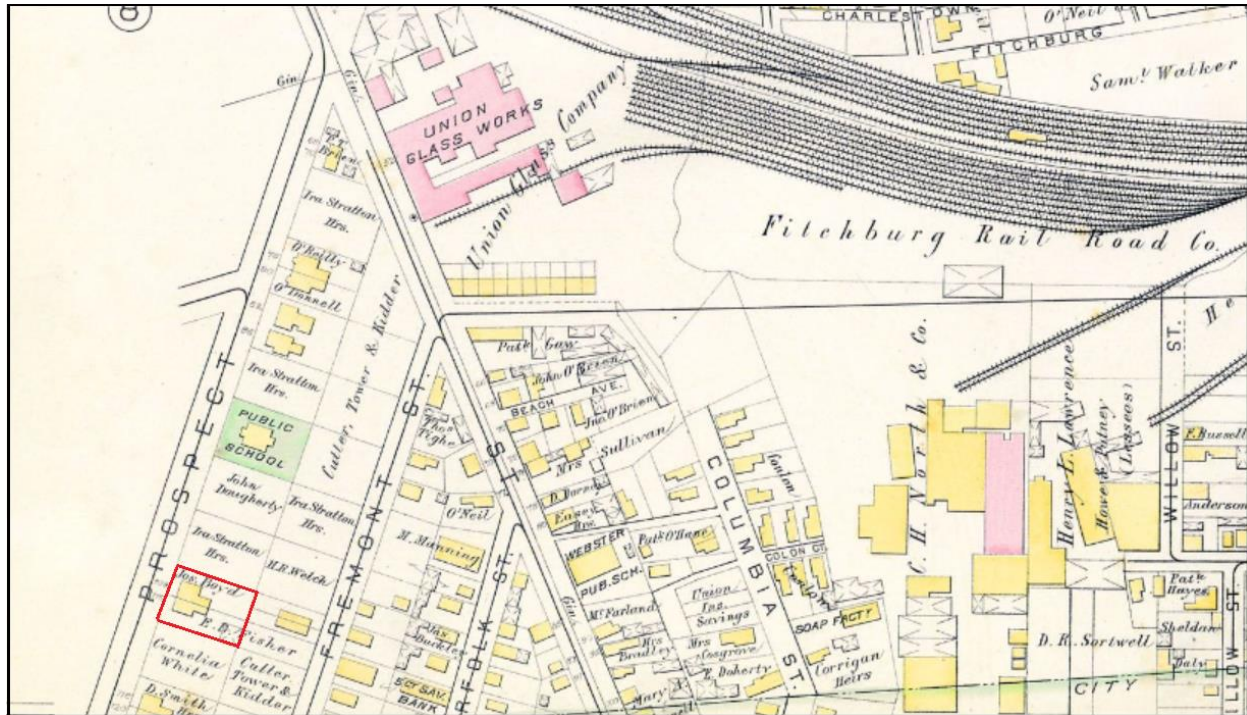
A close-up of the 1874 Hopkins Plate 24 shows that the structure on 108 - 110 Prospect St does not have the bay on the right elevation.



Above: 1895 Hopkins Map, specifying location of 108-110 Prospect St

Though there is little development of further structures on the right side of Prospect St by 1884, the 1884 Hopkins Map does depict the growth of the commercial industries that were integral to the development of the area and of Somerville. The Union Glass Company, soap factories, banks, and the railroad yards are constructed within close proximity of Prospect St.

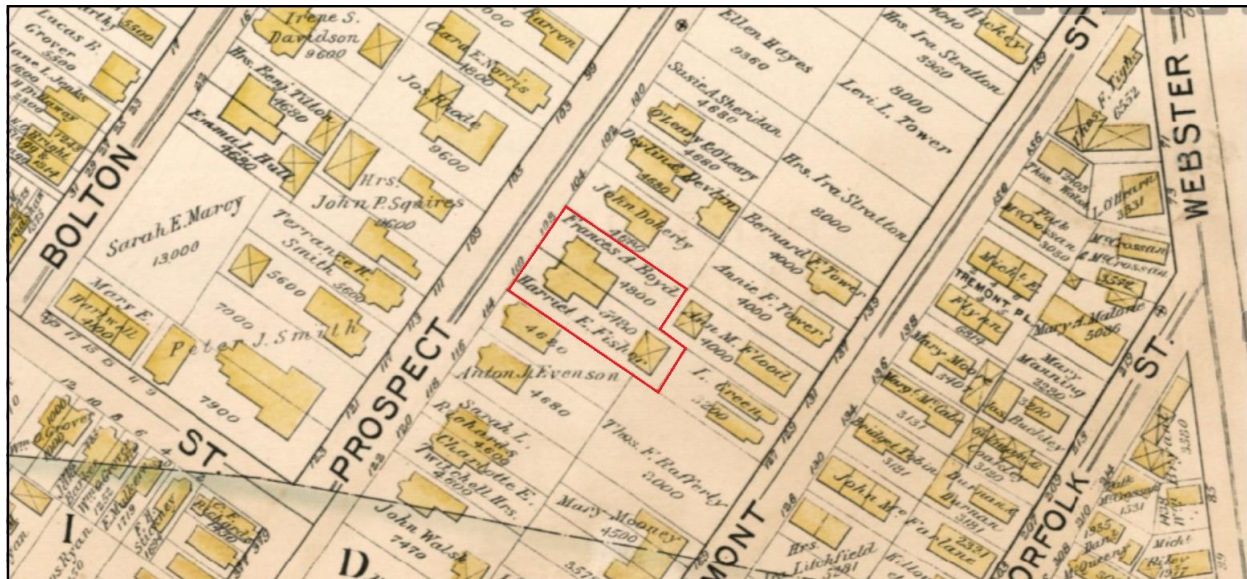
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Above: 1884 Hopkins Map, specifying location of 108-110 Prospect St

By 1895, the area around Prospect St has been platted into building lots and further streets have been laid around the commercial buildings in the area. The development of row housing is also evident along Tremont. These structures were needed to provide additional low-cost housing for workers of the nearby factories.

A close-up of the 1895 Bromley Plate 6 shows that two symmetrical bays have been added to the front elevation of 108-110 Prospect St. Additionally, the map depicts the extension of the lot at 110 Prospect St at the rear. The barn/stable in rear has either been moved on to this lot extension or the previous barn/stable was demolished and a new one constructed.



Above: 1895 Bromley Map, specifying location of 108-110 Prospect St

Before going into the history of the subject property, Staff would like to note that 108 and 110 Prospect Street are, from its construction through 1940, one structure on two separate lots, owned by separate entities. 108 and 110 Prospect Street are currently two separate lots, but now owned by one entity.

| 42. | SOMERVILLE [B] DIRECTORY. |
|-----|--|
| | Bowman Wm., driver George D. Wellington, boards do., Highland avenue |
| | Boyce James, boards 1 Holt's avenue |
| | Boyce James S., molder, house 1 Holt's avenue |
| | Boyce Joseph, iron molder, boards 1 Holt's avenue |
| | Boyce Patrick, teamster, house Joy, near Poplar |
| | Boyd Henry C., iron (5 Custom House st., B.), house Sycamore, corner Medford |
| | Boyd James, upholsterer (23 Fulton, B.), bds. 3 Beacon |
| | Boyd John, upholsterer (23 Fulton, B.), boards 3 Beacon |
| | Boyd Joseph, house 108 Prospect |
| | Boyd Patrick, laborer, house 3 Beacon |
| | Boyd William F., brush-maker, house 34 Springfield |
| | Boyd William B., express messenger (39 Court sq., B.), house 36 Quiney |
| | Boyle Andrew J., carpenter, house 1 Williams court |
| | Boyle Edward G., cabinet-maker, h. r. 180 Somerville av. |
| | Boyle John, carpenter, house 43 Beacon |
| | Boyle Norah, widow of Cornelius, house Merriam, near Somerville avenue |
| | Boyle Terence, laborer, house Linwood, near Poplar |
| | Boyles Augustine B., at McLean Asylum, boards do. |
| | Boynton Herbert H., clerk (State House, Beacon, B.), boards Wm. F. Boynton's, School |
| | Boynton Wm. F., conductor E. R. R., h. 27 Washington |
| | Boynton Wm. F., painter, h. 109 School, opp. Oxford |
| | Brabrook Albert A., clerk (96 and 98 Washington, B.), house Walnut, corner Venzie |
| | Bracca Louis, laborer, house South, near Water |
| | Brackett Charles, furniture finisher (34 Canal, B.), house |

Because it is one building, owned by one entity, Staff has determined to review this as one application. It is important to remember this as Staff presents the histories of these two properties.

108 Prospect St

The first owner of 108 Prospect St is Joseph Boyd. City Directories, along with Bromley Maps state Joseph Boyd as the owner of 108 Prospect St, from 1874 through 1884. Joseph Boyd was born in New Hampshire in 1808 and comes to Somerville as a widower. Upon his death in 1885, his daughter, Frances (b. 1840), takes ownership of the property.

Left: 1881 Somerville City Directory listing for Joseph Boyd

| |
|---|
| Summer E., mason, house 70 Holland, W. S. |
| BOWMAN & PERRY (Selwin Z. Bowman and Albion A. Perry), lawyers, 291 Broadway |
| Boyce Joseph P., house 28 Cedar |
| Boyd David G., paper hanger (B.), h. 60 Newbury, W. S. |
| Edward, engineer (B.), house 4 Aldrich |
| Elizabeth J., widow of Henry C., h. 97 Sycamore |
| Frances A. Miss, house 108 Prospect |
| James, salesman (B.), house 91 Sacramento |
| Directory and Book Printing a Specialty with |

Above: 1892 Somerville City Directory listing for Frances A. Boyd

Frances is not listed as a resident of 108 Prospect, until 1887. This indicates that she lived elsewhere and moved on to the property upon her ownership. It is under Frances' ownership, that her Aunt, Joseph's sister, Mary P. Boyd lives at 108 Prospect from 1887 to 1897. Mary works as a sewing teacher at the Prospect Hill Schoolhouse starting in 1888., before passing away in 1897. Per City Directories we know that Frances owned the property through 1905.

This property was rented by a variety of working-class families throughout the 20th century, including Augustus Alves (b. 1904), a Portuguese immigrant and shoemaker who lived at 108 Prospect Street in 1929. Augustus immigrated with his family in 1916 with his parents and two brothers. The 1919 U.S. Census shows that, originally, the family moved to 90 Prospect St and Augustus worked as a mil-man for a casket company. Other tenants included service and factory workers to teachers.

A list of all residents for 108 Prospect Street and their professions is provided to the right.

| Name | Year(s) of Residency | Occupation |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Alves, Augustus | 1929 | Shoemaker |
| Andelman, Frank | 1916 | |
| Boyd, Frances | 1887-1905 | |
| Boyd, John | 1893 | |
| Boyd, Joseph | 1879-1884 | |
| Boyd, Mary | 1887-1897 | Sewing Teacher |
| Daly, Mary J. | 1906 | |
| Dyson, Addle | 1929 | |
| Dyson, Henry | 1929 | U.S. Navy |
| Flood, Agnes | 1914-1917 | Clerk |
| Flood, Francis II | 1913-1917 | Hardware |
| Flood, Francis H. | 1907-1919 | Hardware |
| Flood, Francis J | 1907-1909 | Restaurant |
| Forsyth, James F. | 1906-1910 | Clerk |
| Greenleaf, Bertha V. | 1924 | |
| Greenleaf, Norman | 1924 | |
| Hallisey, Mary | 1900 | Housekeeper |
| Johnson, Mary | 1927 | |
| Perkins, Robert A. | 1889-1892 | Salesman |
| Silvia, Joseph H. | 1927-1929 | Cabinet Maker |
| Silvia, Mary | 1927-1929 | |

110 Prospect St

Emery B. Fisher is the first listed owner of 110 Prospect St. Emery is born in 1839 and marries Harriet C. Almy (b. 1844) on November 18th, 1885. The 1874 and 1885 Hopkins Maps show Emery as the owner of the property; however, Somerville City Directories only have him listed as a resident at the site starting in 1884.

(Continued on next page.)

Above: 1900 Census listing for Emery B. Fisher & Harriet Fisher

It may be that Emery was an absentee landlord for the first ten (10) years of his ownership prior to moving to the property. In addition to making money as a landlord, Emery Fisher also works as a clerk at the Post Office. Living at 110 Prospect with Emery and Harriet, is Emery's mother, Lavinia Fisher (b. 1799), and his brother Gardner Fisher (b. 1845). Gardner Fisher works as a clerk in a dry goods store at 518 Washington. Lavinia Fisher is listed as a resident at the site in 1884, and Gardner lives at 110 Prospect St from 1877 to 1886. City Directories list Emery Fisher as living at 110 Prospect St from 1884 to 1904. The 1895 Bromley Map shows that Emery's wife, Harriet as the owner of the property.

This property was rented by a variety of working-class families throughout the 20th century, including Dennis Carney (b. 1883), an Irish immigrant, who took a job as a machinist for a nearby meat-packing company, who lived at 110 Prospect Street in 1929 with his wife Agnes. A few of the tenants at 110

Prospect were Irish immigrants including Delia A. Tierney and the Quinns. Delia, (b. 1878) who immigrated in 1899, worked as a private servant for Melrin & Mary J. Messer on Franklin Street. Sarah Quinn (b. 1852), a widow, and her daughter, Mary, immigrated in 1875. Sarah worked as a grocer, while Mary worked as a bookkeeper for Rubber Co. They resided at 110 Prospect from 1907 to 1925. Other tenants included salesmen, factory workers, and clerks.

Below is a list of all residents for 110 Prospect Street and their professions:

| Name | Year(s) of Residency | Occupation |
|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Brennan, Mary E. | 1929 | |
| Brennan, Rose A. | 1929 | Candymaker |
| Carney, Agnes B. | 1929 | |
| Carney, Dennis J | 1929 | Foreman |
| Carney, James | 1906-1908 | Freight-checker |
| Daly, Elizabeth | 1917 | |
| Daly, John | 1917 | Machinist |
| Dunlop, John | 1927 | Moulder |
| Dunlop, Mary | 1927 | |
| Fisher, Emery B. | 1884-1904 | Post Office Clerk |
| Fisher, Gardner | 1877-1886 | Salesman |
| Fisher, Lavina | 1884 | |
| Forristall, Edward G. | 1924 | Machinist |
| Mahoney, Ulick | 1913 | Clerk |
| Patchet, James | 1895 | Clerk |
| Quinn, Edward J. | 1906-1917 | Teamster, Clerk |
| Quinn, John W. | 1906 | Confectionary |
| Quinn, Joseph | 1906-1908 | Clerk |
| Quinn, Mary, A | 1915-1925 | Bookkeeper |
| Quinn, Sarah E | 1907-1925 | |
| Ryan, John | 1912 | Machinist |
| Swift, Emma L. | 1914 | |
| Tierney, Delia A. | 1925-1927 | |

II. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Please see the section immediately below which discusses location, design, materials and any alterations as the same information would be written here, just in longer form.

The National Park Service identifies historic integrity as the ability of a property to convey significance. A property should possess sufficient integrity to convey, represent or contain the values and qualities for which it is judged significant; therefore, the following is an identification and evaluation of these qualities and alterations as they affect the ability of the subject property to convey significance.

The architectural description addresses the properties of 108-110 Prospect St as one structure.

1. **108-110 Prospect St**

The period of relevance for the house starts c.1874-1929

- a. Location: It is likely that this structure is in its original location and was built on-site.
- b. Design: The house is a flat roof, wood-framed apartment building with two symmetrical bays on the front elevation. The property contains three open porches, one on each floor of the rear elevation.
 - Flat roof with deep eaves
 - Brick foundation with partial concrete parging.
 - Front Elevation
 - Symmetric double entryway doors flanked by first story bays with hood
 - Brick and concrete steps from landing to pavement
 - Mid-late 20th century iron railings on front steps.
 - Fenestration consists of quadruple one-over-one windows on the first floor and single or double-hung, replacement sash windows with simple surround on the second floor
 - Right Elevation
 - Fenestration consists of a bay window, one-over-one, double-hung, replacement sash windows with simple surround, and a picture window towards the rear
 - Single hung and 20th-century horizontal slider basement windows visible at foundation level
 - Engaged wood storage shed with door
 - Left Elevation
 - Fenestration consists of one-over-one, double-hung, replacement sash windows with simple surround, and a fixed window flanked on either side by one-over-one, single or double-hung, sash windows.
 - Engaged wood storage shed with door
 - Rear Elevation
 - Contemporaneous rear addition with sloped roof. Porches and access stairs for all three floors
 - Wood porches and stairs
 - Brick steps from landing to pavement
 - Mid-late 20th century iron railings on rear steps
 - Fenestration consists of single one-over-one, single or double-hung, replacement sash windows with simple surround
 - French glass door on each floor leading to porch
- c. Materials:

- Foundation: Brick and Concrete parging over brick,
 - Windows: Aluminum or vinyl
 - Entry door: modern. Aluminum (maybe fiberglass) with one-over-one window
 - Siding: Wood clapboard
 - Trim: Wood
 - Steps: brick with iron rails
 - Roof: Flat on main massing, lean-to for contemporaneous rear addition
- d. Alterations: Replacement windows. Based on similar structures in the area, and the style of architecture, the front two bays may have originally extended to all three floors. Extension of front entrance to connect bays; the entrance was likely flush with the main massing of the building maybe covered with a portico. Bay added to the right elevation. The roof of the contemporaneous addition overhangs roof of main massing before sloping towards rear, likely indicative of a later heightening of the rear addition. One-over-one vinyl or aluminum windows throughout. Modern replacement doors. Inclusion of basement windows using horizontal sliding windows and glass block windows.
- e. Evaluation of Integrity of 108-110 Prospect Street Based on the observations of the building and a study of the historic maps, it is Staff's position that the building does retain integrity of its original form. Alterations have occurred to this structure which obscures original details and architectural design.

III. **FINDINGS**

For a Determination of Significance, the subject building must be found either (i) importantly associated with people, events or history and/or (ii) historically or architecturally significant. The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) must make these findings. The portions of the Demolition Review Ordinance (DRO) related to these findings are included below:

A. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the broad architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the City or the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Residential Structure

1. The HPC must make a finding as to whether or not the RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURE at 108-110 Prospect Street meets any of the criteria stated above.
2. The HPC must specifically state why the RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURE at 108-110 Prospect Street does or does not meet the threshold for historic significance under finding "a".

B. HISTORICAL & ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The findings for historical and/or architectural significance of a historic property address the period, style, method of building construction and association with a reputed architect or builder of the subject property, either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings or structures, and therefore it is in the public interest to be preserved or rehabilitated rather than to be demolished.

Residential Structure

1. The HPC must make a finding as to whether or not the RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURE at 108 -110 Prospect Street meets any of the criteria stated above.
2. The HPC must specifically state why the RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURE at 108-110 Prospect Street or does not meet the threshold for historic significance under finding “b”.

If the HPC makes the above finding, the HPC must state their reasons why they take this position.

IV. VOTE

1. When bringing the matter to a vote, the HPC must include the reasons why the RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURE at 108-110 Prospect Street is or is not “historically significant”.